

**University of Denver  
Faculty Senate  
January 12, 2007  
Mary Reed Building, Renaissance Room South  
Minutes**

**Senators (or their Proxy) present:** Bill Anderson, Alvaro Arias, Davor Balzar, Rick Barbour, John Burnett, Victor Castellani, David Christophel, proxy for Bonnie Clark, David Cox, Ron DeLyser, Sandy Dixon, Jack Donnelly, Sandra Eaton, Margo Espenlaub (Exec. Secretary), Ronald Fariña, James Gilroy, Deb Grealy, Michele Hanna, Michael Karson, Mike Keables, Brian Kiteley, Maciej Kumosa, Gregg Kvistad (Provost), Rick Leaman, Michael Levine-Clark, Mario Lopez, Seth Masket), Don McCubbrey, Lily Mendoza, Robert Mill, Mia Mulvey, Rahul Nair, Ved Nanda, Paul Novak, Cathy Reed, Susan Sadler, Dean Saitta (President), Nancy Sampson, Jack Sheinbaum, Tim Weaver, Margaret Whitt, and Yavuz Yasar.

**Call to Order**

Dean Saitta, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at noon and welcomed everyone present. Motion to approve the minutes from October 20, 2006 was seconded and approved.

**Provost's Report and Questions**

Provost Kvistad reported on the two task forces and discussed additional topics.

(1) The Teaching Task Force (TTF) concluded its work in 2006. The TTF report was discussed by the deans and the Faculty Senate. Individual TTF units are up and running in AHSS, DCB, Education, Penrose, and University College. Other units will form their own TTFs. Each TTF will work with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and its newly formed Excellence in Teaching Committee, which will be the central entity for advising and support.

(2) The Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work Task Force (RTF) completed its report to the Provost in late summer 2006. The deans discussed the report twice in the fall of 2006 and were supportive of the report's contents and in favor of thinking about research strategically at the University. The Deans are particularly interested in focusing research energies and nurturing collaborations between academic units. The Provost has requested a return invitation to visit with the task force to discuss next steps. In the mean time, additional resources are proposed for adding to the office of Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Research. The task force report will soon come to the Faculty Senate for discussion.

(3) The University's parental leave policy is somewhat unclear as stated in the University's policy handbook and the APT document for faculty. In these two documents, there are different approval instances for extending the tenure and promotion probationary period, and there are different lengths of extension that may be available. In addition, there is a potential bias against female employees imbedded in the policy that concerns whether the birth or adoption date occurs in the first year of appointment. We need to work with the Provost to clear up these issues.

(4) Budget development: more detailed information will be available soon. The Provost pointed out three main drivers for developing the fiscal year 2008 budget:

- to create a modest pro forma pool of new resources that would flow to academic units to support their needs;
- to create a substantial fund for faculty salary enhancement that would give the University a first cut for salary remediation on top of merit;
- to pull together resources for need-based financial aid. The need gap is large and increases each year as tuition and fee increases outpace our financial aid increases for continuing students. This will be a long term process for the University.

(5) Pandemic planning has been an on-going effort for several months. Because of the University's tuition dependence, a sustained interruption of classes would have a major financial impact. Combining all of the University's gainshare funds and other reallocatable resources, we currently have about \$40 million in reserves if an emergency were to arise. But the University would rather not draw on these funds. If the internet goes down, this would be a major disruption. If not, most faculty member could probably continue to deliver the curriculum for a short time via internet and even email.

Sen. Whitt asked what pandemic might occur. The Provost responded that this most likely would be a bird flu pandemic. The University plans to house students and essential personnel if need be.

Regarding the Teaching Task Force, Sen. DeLyser asked if all academic units have been notified. The Provost affirmed this.

Pres. Saitta thanked Provost Kvistad for his report to the Faculty Senate.

**Marsico Steering Committee: Review of Funded Programs and Timeline: Mike Keables**

Most of the work of the Marsico Committee is complete with assessment being the last. Sen. Keables provided a hand-out and addressed the question of office space to administer permanent programs. He replied there would be a small space with staff support. Sen. Weaver asked if the visiting scholars program would continue. Sen. Keables responded that the procedures would be the same but would no longer be run through the Marsico Committee. The following programs have been selected for permanent funding:

- Discoveries, a reinvention of SOAR;
- First Year Seminars;
- Writing Initiative and Writing Center, a restructuring of the first year English program;
- Visiting Scholars;
- Undergraduate Research Center, a new program beyond PEN with opportunities for summer research and open to all academic units, not just AHSS (deans will ask for representatives from each unit);
- Math Foundation Seminars, a retooling of undergraduate math requirements;
- Language Center;
- Arts and Sciences Internship Program;
- Quantitative Reasoning Laboratory;
- a General Fund to support ongoing innovation of programs.

Sen. Keables reported that the Marsico books will close by the end of May 2007. Programs will be implanted after July 1, 2007 with the new budget. The Marsico committee will be announcing a celebratory function.

Pres. Saitta thanked Sen. Keables for his report to the Faculty Senate.

**Center for Community Engagement: Report on DU-Denver Initiatives and other Programs: Eric Fretz, Director**

Dr. Fretz distributed handouts on the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning. He stressed that the main goal of the center is to cultivate a public conversation as part of DU's goal for the public good, particularly in the wake of the Oct. 2006 Provost Conference where the DU-City partnership on homeless issues was the first to take off. There are 12-15 faculty who are meeting on this issue, and DU will be hosting Denver's Homeless Event on April 20. The center will be looking for 800 volunteers to work on the event.

For the 2007 winter quarter, the center is sponsoring a series of Public Good Lectures in January and a campus visit on Feb. 15, sponsoring Dr. Jeremy Cohen, Assoc. Vice President and Senior Assoc. Dean for Undergraduate Education at Penn State. Dr. Cohen is founder of Penn State's Laboratory for Public Scholarship and Democracy. On Feb. 16, the First Annual Public Good Conference will be held in the Driscoll Center. Its focus will be "The Theory and Practice of Public Good" and will include presentations by students, faculty, and staff. The Provost has added \$25,000 to the Public Good Research Fund. The fund supports faculty and staff outreach efforts through community partnerships, research, and policy analysis. Proposals are due by mid-March.

Sen. Yasar asked if the Center was open to faculty initiating new projects. Dr. Fretz affirmed this and explained the process for community-based action projects.

Pres. Saitta thanked Eric Fretz for his report to the Faculty Senate.

**Registrar: Grade Inflation: Dennis Becker**

Pres. Saitta introduced the topic of grade inflation which is an issue that the Senate can address proactively. Dennis Becker distributed copies of the Undergraduate Scholarship Report from fall 1980 to 2006, Course Means and Medians data, and a 1980 memo from the University Chancellor regarding a concern about grade inflation.

The Registrar has produced reports on average and median grades for the college of law's accreditation review by the ABA. Median and mean grades have been shared with all deans in the past two years. These have also been modified in the new Banner system, introduced in 1995, which now has a reasonable set of data for the University.

Sen. Ehlers asked about the effect of interterm classes that generally have higher grades. This was acknowledged as a complicating factor. Sen. Christophel asked if faculty can get grade scores for freshman seminars, and Becker affirmed this. Sen. Masket asked about getting SAT data to see if students were improving. Becker said that 20 years of test scores can be supplied.

A question was raised about plotting across the board for 20 years with more seminars, yet fewer students. Sen. Von Stroh asked if a correlation with different institutions is relative to faculty salaries. Becker responded that it was not.

Sen. Whitt asked about growth in international programs. Becker responded that there was good data from fall 2002 on. Becker has written a report on the increase of AP and IB credit. Sen. Whitt pointed out that how well a student performs at the high school level can be a determinant of how well they will do in DU courses. Sen. Castellani asked if AP scores have improved. There is uncertainty about that. A point was raised that high grades are expected by DU students paying four times more for tuition than CU. Sen. McCubbrey asked if faculty can find out if we are contributing to grade inflation.

Sen. Kiteley asked if grades could be separated to see the number of A's. He asked if faculty were more afraid to give C's and D's. Becker responded that data is available from 1985 and that there we have a frequency distribution by college. Other questions were raised regarding course grades and course evaluations, what would be gained by having more data on grading, and what other schools are doing about grade inflation.

Pres. Saitta asked if the Faculty Senate would like to form a task force to work on how to use the information on grade inflation. Sen. Sampson asked for more data first so we can interpret the information on Dennis Becker's second visit to the Senate in February.

Pres. Saitta thanked Dennis Becker for his report to the Faculty Senate.

### **New Business**

Sen. Sampson asked about the approval process for the Honors Program. Pres. Saitta serves on the Honors Faculty Advisory Committee and said a document will come to the Faculty Senate in February. The Senate will have a discussion led by the Academic Planning Committee.

Sen. Whitt asked about the tuition exchange program. Pres. Saitta said there will be research on this in the weeks ahead.

### **Adjournment**

Sen. Whitt moved to adjourn and the motion was seconded and passed. President Saitta adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m. and thanked everyone for their participation today.

### **Respectfully submitted by**

Margo Espenlaub, Faculty Senate Executive Secretary